

### Winter Survival Kit: Got Yours?

Many people have some sort of a "kit" thrown together for traveling in Montana in the winter, but do you really have what you need in it? How long have those old granola bars been in there? Did your teenagers take things out while needing something and "forget" to tell you it's now gone? Check out your kit and make sure it's ready to go for the winter season. I will admit that my kit for my personal vehicle is much more compact than the one we carry in our office SUV. The top two below show my personal kit for my car laid out on my desk, including the small shovel/spade for snow. The bottom picture shows our office vehicle's winter survival kit.







#### Minimum Items to have in a Vehicle Winter Survival Kit:

- Cell Phone and Charger
- First-Aid Kit
- Extra Clothing
- Ice Scrapper
- Spare Tire

- Water bottles
- High Calorie/Non-Perishable Foods
- Moist Towelettes/Paper Towels
- Flares/Whistle to Signal for Help
- ❖ Tool Kit (ie multi-tool)

# Additional supplies to consider:

- Blankets/Sleeping Bags
- Flashlights with Extra Batteries
- Portable Shovel
- Tow Rope (chains are dangerous)
- Battery booster cables or battery booster
- Compass/Maps
- Small Metal Can w/ waterproof matches to melt snow
- Gel Fuel Cans
- Small garbage bags and ties
- Small bag of cat litter or sand



#### When traveling:

- ✓ Fuel up and stay above a half tank throughout your trip.
- ✓ Check the road conditions online, in an app or most states have a 511 number you can call.
- ✓ Check the forecast before leaving, at your start and end destinations. Sometimes the roads are good in the location you are leaving from, but conditions may worsen as you get closer to your destination. <a href="https://www.weather.gov/">https://www.weather.gov/</a>
- ✓ Tell someone where you are going, what time you leave, and the route you take to get there.
  - Use better traveled roads.
  - o Call when you arrive safely. Otherwise, they can alert officials.
- ✓ Don't use cruise control on wet/icy roads.

# If you run into problems, keep the following items in mind:

- ✓ Use a tow rope, not a chain to pull a vehicle that is stuck. Make sure it is no longer than 6 feet. Chains can backlash, and cause serious injuries or death.
- ✓ If a chain is the only available item, throw a heavy jacket or blanket over it before attempting to tow a vehicle out.
- ✓ If you do get stuck, and it looks like you may be in the vehicle for a while,
  - o Stay with the vehicle, unless you can clearly see sturdier/warmer shelter
  - o Run the engine 10 minutes each hour for heat, and crack the window just a bit
  - Keep the tailpipe clear
  - A hubcap or visor can be used as a shovel
  - Burning oil in a hubcap may allow rescuers to find you if conditions have improved
  - Distress Signal is: Honk your horn for three long blasts, 10 seconds apart. Repeat every 30 seconds.